

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT COUNTRY REPORT ON TERROR 2005: BANGLADESH

DHAKA, APRIL 29, 2006 -- The U.S. State Department has issued the Country Report on Terror 2005. Following is the text of the Bangladesh portion.

The report covers activities through December 31, 2005.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The Bangladesh government affirms full support for the global war on terror, and in 2005 it adhered to nine additional UN Conventions on Terrorism, leaving the International Convention for the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism as the only one it has not joined. Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia regularly condemned terrorism at domestic and international forums. Bangladesh enforces UN Security Council resolutions related to terrorism, including the identification and freezing of assets of individuals and organizations designated as terrorists or terrorist supporters. It banned as terrorist organizations Jamaatul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB), Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB), and Harkat ul-Jihad-I-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B).

Bangladesh's limited success, however, in countering JMB's escalating acts of terrorism in 2005 underscored the government's serious institutional, resource, and political constraints. Porous borders, endemic corruption, and debilitating in-fighting between the two major political parties continued to undermine the government's broader counterterrorism posture.

There are no formal U.S.-Bangladesh agreements on the investigation or prosecution of acts of international terrorism against U.S. citizens or interests. However, in 2005 there was good cooperation between law enforcement agencies on several cases relating to domestic terrorism. With U.S. technical assistance, Bangladesh in 2005 drafted a new, comprehensive anti-money laundering law. It is also working with the U.S. to strengthen controls at land, sea, and aeronautical ports of entry.

North Korea, Iran, and Libya have diplomatic missions in Bangladesh. Cuba, Syria, and Sudan have non-resident missions.

SAFE HAVEN ASSESSMENT

Bangladesh asserts there are no international terrorist groups in Bangladesh, and denies allegations that northeast Indian insurgent groups operate from Bangladesh with the connivance of the government. The Bangladesh military maintained a large presence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), and periodically uncovered weapons caches left over from dormant insurgencies in Burma and the CHT. Bangladesh supports the Port Security Initiative and the Container Security Initiative.

TERRORIST GROUPS

In 2005, there was a significant shift in terrorism's targets, style, and tempo in Bangladesh. Previously, attacks were on isolated individuals, largely went unclaimed, and were not seen as part of a broader, public campaign. In 2005, JMB emerged as an organization capable of launching coordinated nationwide attacks on "un-Islamic" persons and facilities in pursuit of its goal of a fundamentalist Islamic society.

On August 17, JMB exploded nearly 500 coordinated small bombs across the country. Leaflets found at the blast sites threatened judges, government officials, politicians, and other "enemies of Islam," including the U.S. and the UK. In November, JMB breached a major psychological barrier by launching deadly suicide attacks, a first in Bangladesh.

FOREIGN GOVERNMENT COOPERATION

There have been no attacks against U.S. citizens or interests in Bangladesh.

=====

PR/ 2006